

Message Text

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TO ALL AMERICAN REPUBLIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS

S E C R E T STATE 001370

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, MOPS, CU, AD

SUBJECT: CUBAN MILITARY INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA: REPORT
NUMBER 7

REF: STATE 304964

FOR AMBASSADOR OR CHARGE FROM ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS

UPDATE ON REFERENCED SUBJECT FOLLOWS:

A. IN MID-DECEMBER 1975, OFFICIALS OF THE POPULAR MOVE-
MENT FOR THE LIBERATION OF ANGOLA (MPLA) TOLD A FOREIGNER
THAT 5,000 CUBANS WERE THEN IN ANGOLA. THE MPLA OFFICIALS
ADDED THAT MOST OF THE CUBANS, THE MAJORITY OF WHOM ARE
WHITE, WERE FIGHTING WITH MPLA SOLDIERS.

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B. A LATER ESTIMATE PLACES AS MANY AS 7,500 CUBANS IN THE

COUNTRY. ACCORDING TO THIS ESTIMATE, 4,200 CUBANS MAY HAVE GONE TO ANGOLA ON 14 SAILINGS BY CUBAN SHIPS AND ANOTHER 3,300 ABOARD 43 AIRCRAFT FLIGHTS.

C. IN MID-DECEMBER 1975, 50 CUBANS WERE BELIEVED STATIONED AT MPLA MILITARY HEADQUARTERS IN LUANDA, WHERE THEY EVIDENTLY WORK AS STAFF OFFICERS AND ADVISORS.

ANOTHER 250-300 CUBANS WERE OBSERVED MOVING SOUTH FROM THE QUIBALA (10-46S, 14-59E) AREA. CUBAN TROOPS IN THE FIELD SHARE QUARTERS WITH MPLA SOLDIERS AND WEAR MPLA UNIFORMS.

D. THE CUBANS HAVE BROUGHT A LARGE AMOUNT OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO ANGOLA. THE MAIN ROAD BETWEEN LUANDA AND THE AIRPORT IS FREQUENTLY CLOSED BECAUSE OF CUBAN TROOP MOVEMENTS.

E. FROM 19-26 DECEMBER, THREE UNSCHEDULED CUBANA AIRLINES FLIGHTS, PROBABLY GOING TO AFRICA, PASSED THROUGH SANTA MARIA, AZORE ISLANDS; AND A FOURTH AIRCRAFT PASSED THROUGH GEORGETOWN, GUYANA. ON 29 DECEMBER, A CUBANA AIRCRAFT THAT HAS BEEN USED IN THE CUBAN AIRLIFT TO ANGOLA WAS EN ROUTE TO THE CONGO (BRAZZAVILLE) WITH A STOP IN THE AZORES.

F. CUBAN SHIPS THAT ARE KNOWN OR SUSPECTED TO BE SUPPORTING OPERATIONS IN ANGOLA WERE LOCATED AS FOLLOWS ON 3 DECEMBER: THE "CERRO PELADO," "IMIAS," "EL JIGUE," AND "SIERRA MAESTRA" WERE "AT SEA"; THE "CORAL ISLANDS" WAS IN THE HARBOR AT LUANDA; AND THE "UVERO" WAS TAKING ON A CARGO OF CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL AT THE MILITARY PORT OF MARIEL, CUBA. IN JANUARY 1975, THE CUBAN MINISTRY OF MERCHANT MARINE AND PORTS ORDERED THAT THE "CERRO PELADO," "IMIAS," AND "CORAL ISLANDS" BE EQUIPPED WITH 50-TON CAPACITY CRANES THAT CAN LIFT SUCH HEAVY MILITARY EQUIPMENT AS TANKS. IN THE LATE 1960'S, THE "CERRO PELADO" WAS OUTFITTED WITH A HOSPITAL SECTION THAT INCLUDES AN OPERATING ROOM.

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G. IN LATE DECEMBER 1975, THREE SENIOR MPLA LEADERS WHO HAD ATTENDED THE FIRST CONGRESS OF THE CUBAN COMMUNIST PARTY IN HAVANA, VISITED KINGSTON, JAMAICA. THE MPLA OFFICIALS MET WITH PRIME MINISTER MANLEY ON 26 DECEMBER, HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE, ATTENDED A PUBLIC RALLY ON 27 DECEMBER, AND LEFT FOR GUYANA ON 28 DECEMBER. THEY LEFT GEORGETOWN FOR CARACAS ON 1 JANUARY 1976. FROM CARACAS, THE MPLA LEADERS PLANNED TO TRAVEL TO LIMA,

PANAMA CITY, AND POSSIBLY MEXICO CITY.

H. A CUBAN AIRLINES FLIGHT IS SCHEDULED TO LEAVE CUBA ON THE AFTERNOON OF 2 JANUARY 1976 FOR BRAZZAVILLE, VIA THE AZORES AND GUINEA-BISSAU. THIS AIRCRAFT IS KNOWN TO BE SUPPORTING CUBAN OPERATIONS IN ANGOLA. THERE IS AN

UNCONFIRMED REPORT THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAS MADE AVAILABLE TO CUBA LONG-RANGE AIRCRAFT THAT ARE CAPABLE OF FLYING FROM CUBA TO AFRICA WITHOUT REFUELING. INGERSOLL

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